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Gray Davis
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MEMORANDUM

TO: All Managers and Supervisors

FROM: Cindy Francisco
Safety Coordinator

DATE: June 3, 2003

SUBJECT: SAFETY MEETING IDEAS – JUNE 2003

Suggested issues to discuss during your next meeting are:

1. Recording Keeping Updates

With the new fiscal year approaching, make sure your required records are up-to-date. These forms should be maintained in your (the manager's or supervisor's) office files:

- Std. Form 261 *"Authorization to Use Privately Owned Vehicles on State Business"* for employees who use their private car for state business. This form is required to be completed annually.
- Defensive Drivers Training Certificate. Employees who drive on state business should take this class every four years. Are they up-to-date?
- Medical Information. Do you have a list of your employees, their home telephone numbers, addresses, important medical information such as allergies to medication and who to contact in case of emergency? Is this information up-to-date?

2. Insect & Spider Bites

According to the State Compensation Insurance Fund, each year many workers experience insect and spider bites serious enough to make them lose time off the job.

If you are stung by a bee, remove the stinger gently (with tweezers, if possible) and avoid squeezing the poison sac. Apply an ice pack or a cloth dipped in cold water to reduce swelling and itching. A sting from a yellow jacket can be deadly. These insects feed on dead animals and can cause blood poisoning. If you have an allergic reaction to a bite, get medical help immediately.

The energy challenge facing California is real. Every Californian needs to take immediate action to reduce energy consumption. For a list of simple ways you can reduce demand and cut your energy costs, see our Website: <http://www.arb.ca.gov>.

California Environmental Protection Agency

Of spiders causing serious medical problems only the black widow and brown recluse are considered serious threats. The black widow has a shiny black body, about the size of a pea. With legs extended, it's about an inch long. Females have a red or yellow hourglass mark on their underside. The black widow spider is partial to outdoor latrines and other places that attract flies. The black widow spider will attack with even the slightest provocation. Its bite is less painful than a pinprick, and does not cause a hole in the skin, but soon, intense pain and stiffness set in. Symptoms also may include fever, nausea, abdominal pain and chills. For children and the elderly, black widow bites can be lethal.

Also beware of the brown recluse spider. When it comes to insect bites, the bite of the brown recluse spider is one of the most feared. This yellowish-tan to dark brown spider is 1/4-1/2 inch long. It has a characteristic fiddle-shaped mark on its upper body. Its bite can have painful, disfiguring, and even deadly results. Within hours of a bite, victims may suffer severe pain and stiffness, fever, weakness, vomiting or a rash. The recluse's venom destroys cells and clots blood, blocking blood vessels and leading to gangrene. Within 24 hours, the wound erupts into an open sore ranging from the size of a thumbnail to that of an adult's hand. Anyone bitten by either spider should seek medical help immediately.

Experts say, spiders typically don't go looking for human prey. Spiders are generally shy and try to avoid contact with humans. Leave them to their dark, secluded spaces – under rocks, in debris piles, sheds, closets and attics, and there's no worry. Invade their space, though, and risk a bite. Spiders will attack if trapped or if pressed against the skin.

Not all people react the same way to these spider bites. The variation may be due to the amount of venom injected or the person's physiology or immune system. The first line of treatment, if you suspect a bite is to apply a cold compress. However, if you have a bite and experience other side effects, get medical treatment immediately.

3. It's Time to Prepare for West Nile Virus.

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) states that the West Nile Virus is spread by mosquitoes. Infection with the virus can cause severe and sometimes fatal illness. There were over 4000 cases of West Nile disease in the US during 2002, including 284 deaths. It is likely that all mainland states in the United States will see West Nile virus activity in 2003. People over 50 are at the highest risk for developing severe West Nile disease. Relatively few children have been reported with severe West Nile Virus disease. By contrast, most of the deaths due to WNV during 2002 were among people over 50 years old. Half of those deaths were among people over 77 years old. It is always a good idea for children to avoid mosquito bites, but it's also important for adults - especially older adults - to take steps to avoid mosquito bites.

There is a lot that you, personally, can do to reduce your chance of West Nile virus infection.

- Reduce the number of mosquito bites you get. Make a habit of using insect repellent with DEET when outdoors. The more DEET a repellent contains the longer time it can protect you from mosquito bites. A higher percentage of DEET in a repellent does not mean that your protection is better—just that it will last longer. DEET concentrations higher than 50% do not increase the length of protection. Choose a repellent that provides protection for the amount of time that you will be outdoors. Spray repellent on exposed skin and clothing.
- Get the details about safe repellent use (read and follow the manufacturer's DIRECTIONS FOR USE, as printed on the product).
- Prime mosquito-biting hours are usually dusk to dawn. Pay special attention to protection during these hours, or avoid being outdoors.
- You can reduce the number of mosquitoes around your home and workplace. Mosquitoes breed in standing water, so check your yard once a week: get rid of containers that aren't being used, empty water from flower pots, change water in bird baths and maintain clean gutters.
- Make sure window and door screens are in good condition.
- More detailed information may be found on the CDC website at www.cdc.gov.

Document your meeting by using Form HS-1 "Safety Meeting Report" which I have attached for your convenience. This can also be used, if you choose, to route the information to each employee. This record should be kept in your files for one year.

If you have any questions, I can be reached at (916) 323-1158 or cfrancis@arb.ca.gov.